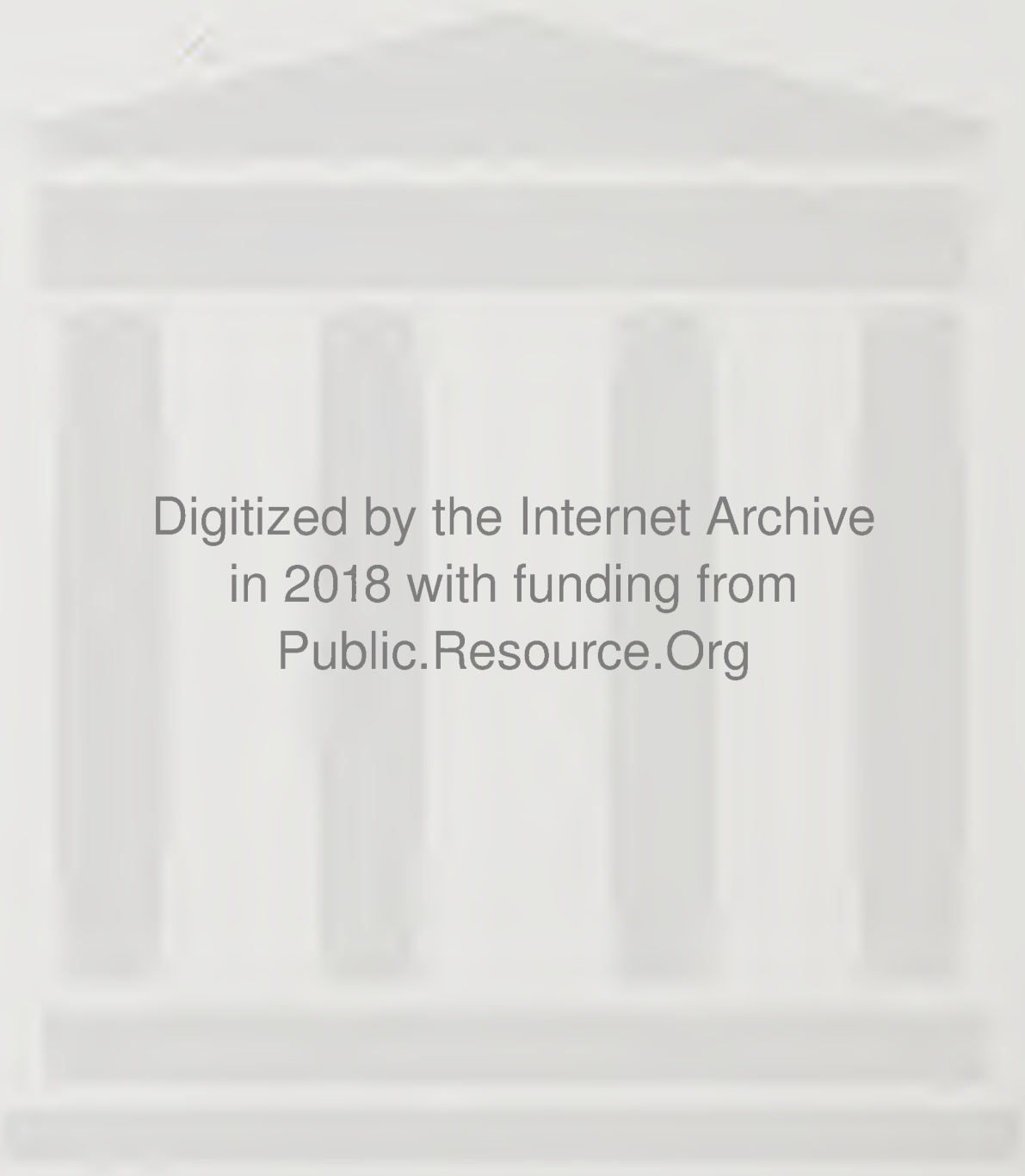


My pledge to freedom

SPEECHES

Jawaharlal Nehru
Rabindra Nath Tagore
Subhas Chandra Bose
Mahatma Gandhi
Sarojini Naidu and
Subrahmanyam Bharati's
Translation of Vande Mataram



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My pledge to freedom

Foreword

Text of Speeches

of

Jawaharlal Nehru

Rabindra Nath Tagore

Subhas Chandra Bose

Mahatma Gandhi

Sarojini Naidu

and

Subrahmanyam Bharati's translation of

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's

Vande Mataram

FOREWORD

...“To the youth of the country I would make a special appeal for they are the leaders of tomorrow and on them will be cast the burden of upholding India's freedom”...

Jawaharlal Nehru

...“Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls...into that heaven of freedom my father let my countrymen awake”...

Rabindranath Tagore

...“I therefore, appeal to you to be ready, to be prepared for the utmost service and for the maximum sacrifice in the cause of India's emancipation”...

Subhas Chandra Bose

...“for I can see that in the midst of death, life persists, in the midst of untruth, truth persists, in the midst of darkness, light persists. Hence, I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is love. He is the supreme good”...

Mahatma Gandhi

...“Shall we not give the world the complete message of Mahatma Gandhi. Though his voice will not speak again, have we not a million, million voices to bear his message to the world, not only to the world, of our contemporaries but to the world generation after generation”...

Sarojini Naidu

The Independence Movement in India and its liberation from the colonial rule was a landmark in the history of Mankind. The Greatest of Greats in the field of Philosophy, Theology, Art, Literature and Social Service were born in those times.

Innumerable men and women struggled for freedom from foreign rule and also fought against social evils for the upliftment of the downtrodden, weaker and deprived sections of society.

Many countries, inspired by the Indian experience, broke free the shackles of oppression using non-violent means for gaining independence. That was a time of massive uprising for the rights of human dignity and the “Sun finally set on the British Empire”... or for that matter... “Colonial Rule”.

There was a feeling of rejuvenation permeating the atmosphere; and joy and light penetrated the dark areas of human existence illuminating the very essence of the Being.

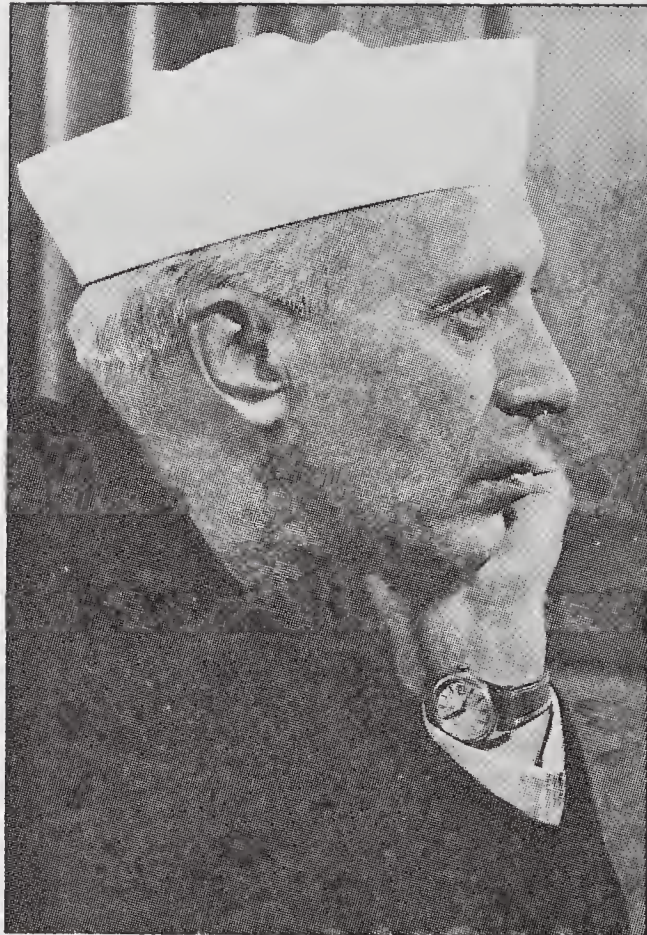
‘TAMASO MA JYOTIRGAMAYA’ — Lead me from darkness to light.

Today after 50 years of independence, how many youth in our country are aware of the struggle, the patience, the joys and sorrows of millions of people who came together to be ‘FREE’. CCRT has attempted, in this small booklet, with an accompanying audio cassette, to reach out to the young and share with them experiences in the words of great luminaries who, along with hundreds of others, worked for an independent India and were finally witness to its Freedom.

CCRT dedicates this endeavour with gratitude to the Freedom Fighters who made it possible for us to breathe in a free India today.

October, 1996

Director General
CCRT



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

- 1889 November, 14 Born at Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. Studied Natural Science at Cambridge. He later qualified as a barrister.
- 1912 He returned to India and later married Kamala Kaul. A daughter, Indira, was born to them in 1917.
- 1919-1929 His political apprenticeship with Indian National Congress.
- 1929 Was elected President of Indian National Congress.
- 1920-1947 Worked with Gandhiji in the freedom struggle movement.
- 1947 August 15, became free India's first Prime Minister. He held this post for 17 years.
- 1964 May, 27 Died in New Delhi.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE MIDNIGHT SESSION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, AUGUST 14, 1947

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.

At the dawn of history, India started, on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her successes and her failures. Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

Freedom and power bring responsibility. That responsibility rests upon this Assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom, we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now. That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we might fulfill the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the



ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest men of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but so long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over. And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.

To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we make an appeal to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism. No time for ill-will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.

BROADCAST TO THE NATION, AUGUST 15, 1948.

Fellow countrymen, comrades, and friends. A year ago, on this very day, and at this very hour, I broadcasted to you from this place. Free India is one year old today. But what trials and tribulations she has passed through during this infancy of her freedom. She has survived inspite of all the peril and disaster, that might well have overwhelmed a more mature, and well established nation. We have reason to be thankful for this achievement and for the many other achievements that stand to the credit of our people. Let us not be-little our record or forget the courage, the hard work, and the sacrifice with which our people have faced and overcome many of these perils during this fateful year.

But let us, also not forget where we have failed, or where we have erred. For our failures and errors have been many. Some of these are obvious enough. But the real failure has been a failure of the spirit and a falling away from the high standards set by the father of our Nation, under whose wise guidance we had struggled and marched for over a quarter of a century. He had taught us that worthy ends can only be achieved through worthy means. That ideals and objectives can never be divorced from the methods adopted to realize them. He had told us to cast out fear, for fear is not only ignoble but is also the parent of hatred and violence. Many of us forgot this lesson, and fear gripped us. Fear not of some distant adversary, but fear of each other, and evil deeds followed in its trail. The master who guided us and inspired us, is no more. We have to shoulder the burden ourselves. Now the first question we have to put to ourselves is this: Do we stand by his teaching and message or do we stray into new paths?

All of us, talk of India, and all of us demand many things from India. What do we give to her in return? We can take

nothing from her, beyond what we give her. India, will ultimately give us what we give her of love and service and productive and creative work. India will be what we are, our thoughts and actions will shape her. Born of her fruitful womb, we are children of hers. Little bits of the India of today, and yet we are also the parents of the India of tomorrow. If we are big so will India be, and if we grow little-minded and narrow in outlook, so also will India be.

Our troubles during the past year were largely the result of this narrowness of outlook and pettiness in action which is so foreign to India's great cultural inheritance. Communalism threatened to crush the free spirit of us. Provincialism came in the way of that larger unity which is so essential to India's greatness and progress. The spirit of factions, spread and made us forget the big things we had stood for.

We have to find ourselves again, and go back to the free India of our dreams. We have to rediscover the old values and place them in the new setting of a free India. For freedom brings responsibility, and can only be sustained by self discipline, hard work and the spirit of a free people.

So let us be rid of everything that limits us and degrades us. Let us cast out fear and communalism and provincialism. Let us build up a free and democratic India, where the interest of the masses of our people



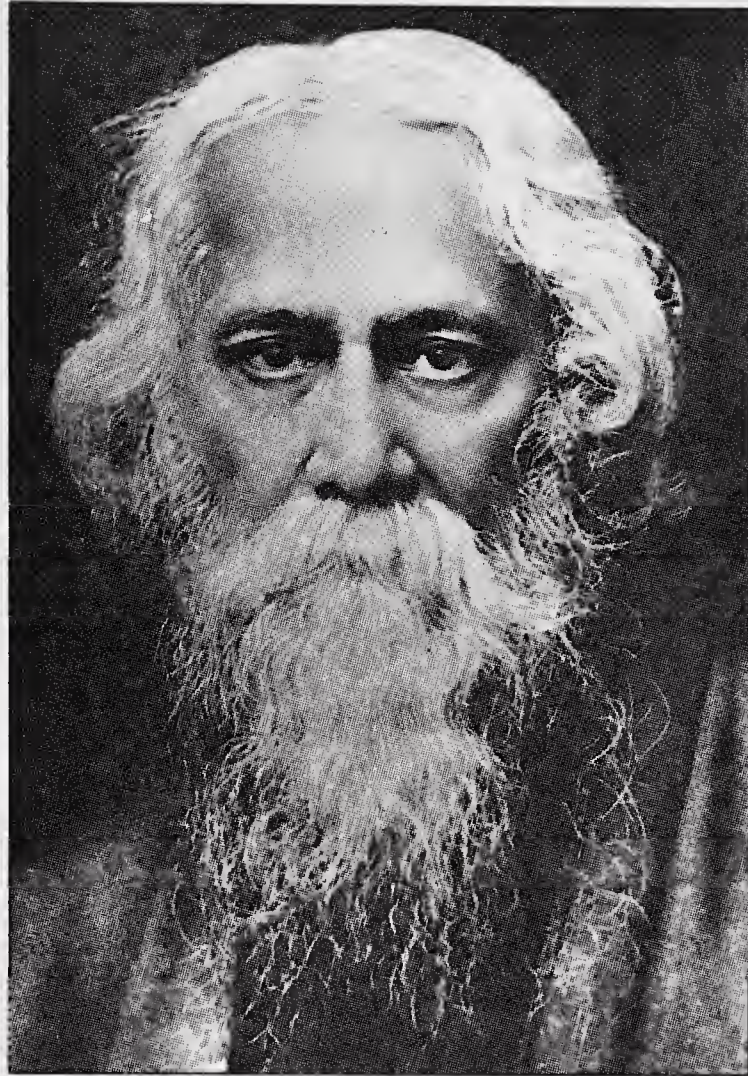
has always the first place, to which all other interests must submit.

Freedom has no meaning unless it brings relief to these masses from their many burdens. Democracy means tolerance, tolerance not merely of those who agree with us, but of those who do not agree with us. With the coming of freedom our patterns of behaviour must change also, so as to fit in with this freedom.

To the youth of the country, I would make a special appeal, for they are the leaders of tomorrow and on them will be cast the burden of upholding India's honour and freedom. My generation is a passing one and soon we shall hand over the bright torch of India, which embodies her great and eternal spirit, to younger hands and stronger arms, may they hold it aloft, undimmed and untarnished so that its light reaches every home.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

1861 May, 7	Born at Calcutta, started publishing poems from the age of thirteen.
1901	His family moved to Santiniketan where the Brahmacharya Ashram and school was opened.
1905	Associates himself with the Swadeshi movement.
1910	Published Gitanjali, a collection of poems that was translated into English in 1912.
1913	Nobel prize of literature was awarded to him.
1915	Was Knighted, but returned the honour in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919.
1918	Founded Visva Bharati University.
1928-1940	Began painting and produced over two thousand paintings and drawings.
1941 August, 7	Died in Calcutta.



RECITING HIS POEM FROM GITANJALI

(Published in English, 1912)

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held
high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into
fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards
perfection;

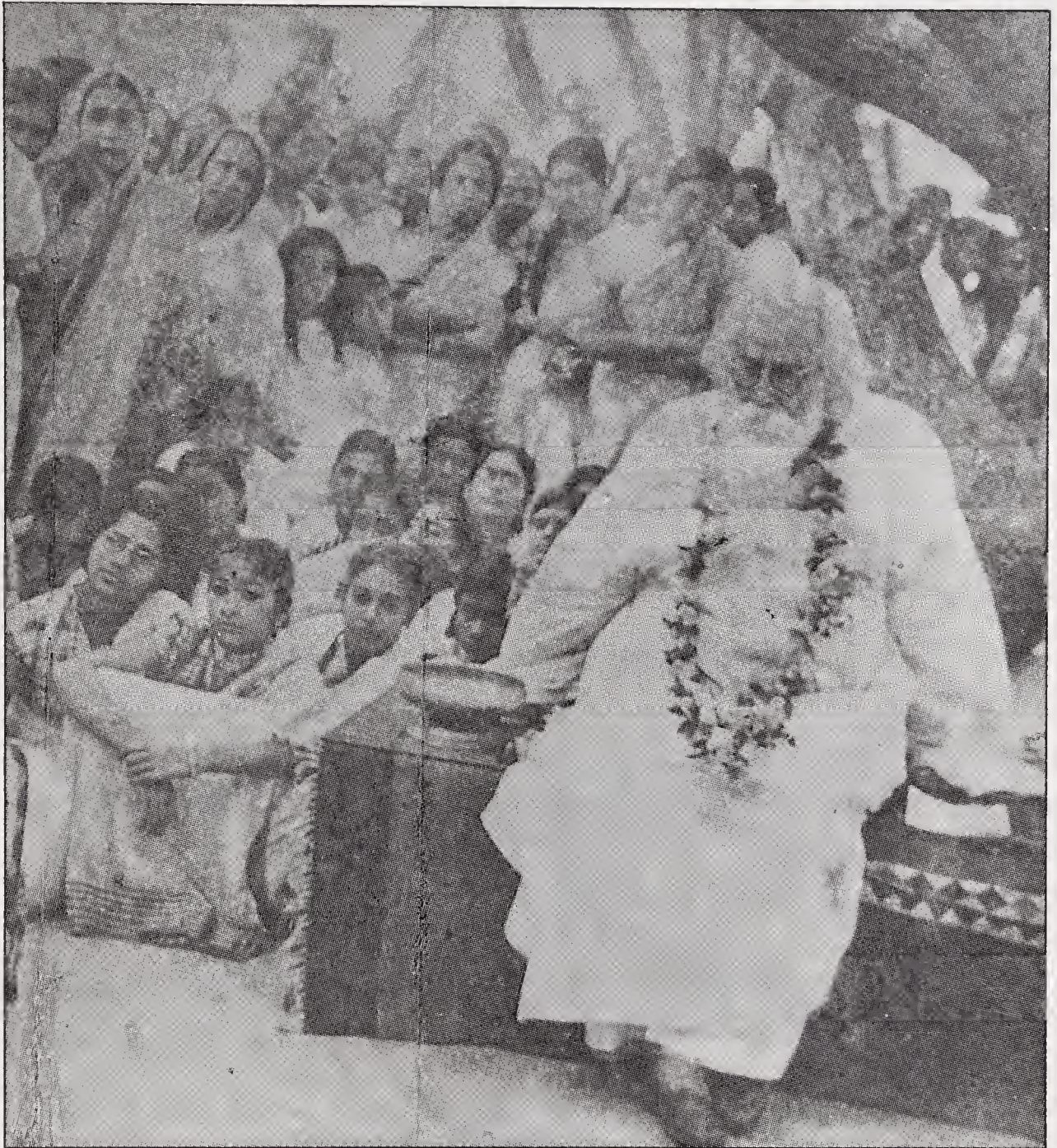
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into every
widening thought and action.

Into that heaven of freedom, my father,
let my country awake.

Rabindranath Tagore's song, Jana-gana-mana was adopted by the Constituent Assembly as the National Anthem of India on January 24, 1950. The first stanza constitutes the full version of the National Anthem. It reads :

Jana-gana-mana-adhinayaka jaya he
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata
Punjaba-Sindhu-Gujarata-Maratha
Dravida-Utkala-Banga
Vindhya-Himachala-Yamuna-Ganga
Uchhala-jaladhi-taranga
Tava subha name jage,
Tava subha asisa mange,
Gahe tava jaya-gatha.
Jana-Gana-Mangala-dayaka jaya he
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata
Jaya he Jaya he Jaya he
Jaya Jaya Jaya, Jaya he



Tagore's English Translation of Jana-Gana-mana

Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people
Dispenser of India's destiny.

The name rouses the hearts of Punjab, Sind,
Gujarat and Maratha,
Of Dravida and Orissa and Bengal.

It echoes in the hills of Vindhya and Himalayas,
mingles in the music of Jamuna and Ganga and is
chanted by the waves of the Indian sea.

They pray for thy blessings and sing thy praise
The saving of all people waits in thy hand,
thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, victory to thee.



SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1897 January, 23 | Born at Cuttack, Orissa. Studied at University of Calcutta and later in Cambridge, England. |
| 1920 | He passed Indian Civil Service examination and resigned. |
| 1928 | He was elected President of the Bengal Congress. |
| 1938-1939 | He was elected President of Indian National Congress. |
| 1943 | Proclaimed establishment of Indian National Army. |

SPEAKING TO INDIANS IN EAST ASIA, NOV. 6, 1943.

I appeal to you to be ready to pay the price of freedom which is service and suffering.

Friends, I would beg of you to remember, the part which the youths and particularly students have played in the freedom movement in other countries in Europe, as well as in Asia.

Are you not going to emulate what youths and students have done in Russia, in Germany, in France, in Italy, in China and other countries under the sun. I am sure you will live up to their example and even improve upon it.

I would also beg of you to remember what Mother India expects of you. In addressing this appeal to you. I feel emboldened at the part which you have already played in the national struggle, during the last few decades. There is no doubt that we have advanced a long way towards our goal of 'Purna Swaraj' or 'Complete Independence'.

I have just told you that freedom is a priceless treasure, and we can hope to win freedom for ourselves only when we have paid the price, that price, as I have just told you, is service and suffering.

I therefore, appeal to you to be ready, to be prepared for the utmost service and for the maximum sacrifice in the call of India's emancipation. I am sure you will rise to the occasion when the call comes. I am sure you will be prepared, to do everything possible to give up even life itself should the need and the occasion arise, so that, India may be free.

Friends, those of you who are poor and obscure, I should like to see your poverty and obscurity devoted to the service of your motherland, Work, that she might prosper. Suffer, that she might rejoice.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

1869 October, 2	Born at Porbandar, Gujarat
1888-1891	Studied law in England and started practice in Rajkot as a barrister.
1893-1914	Went to South Africa in the course of his legal profession. Started the movement against racial discrimination by Europeans towards the Indians. Evolved the concept of Satyagraha ("firmness in truth") and Ahimsa ("peaceful protest".) Went to jail in the course of Satyagraha.
1915	Returned to India. Led the freedom movement of India against the British
1919	Started Satyagraha in protest against Rowlatt Acts.
1930	Started Salt Satyagraha against the restrictions imposed on salt production.
1942	Began Quit India Movement.
1947-1948	Worked for communal harmony and welfare of sufferers of communal violence after partition.
1948 January, 30	Assassinated in Delhi.



PUBLISHED FIRST IN YOUNG INDIA OCTOBER 11, 1928

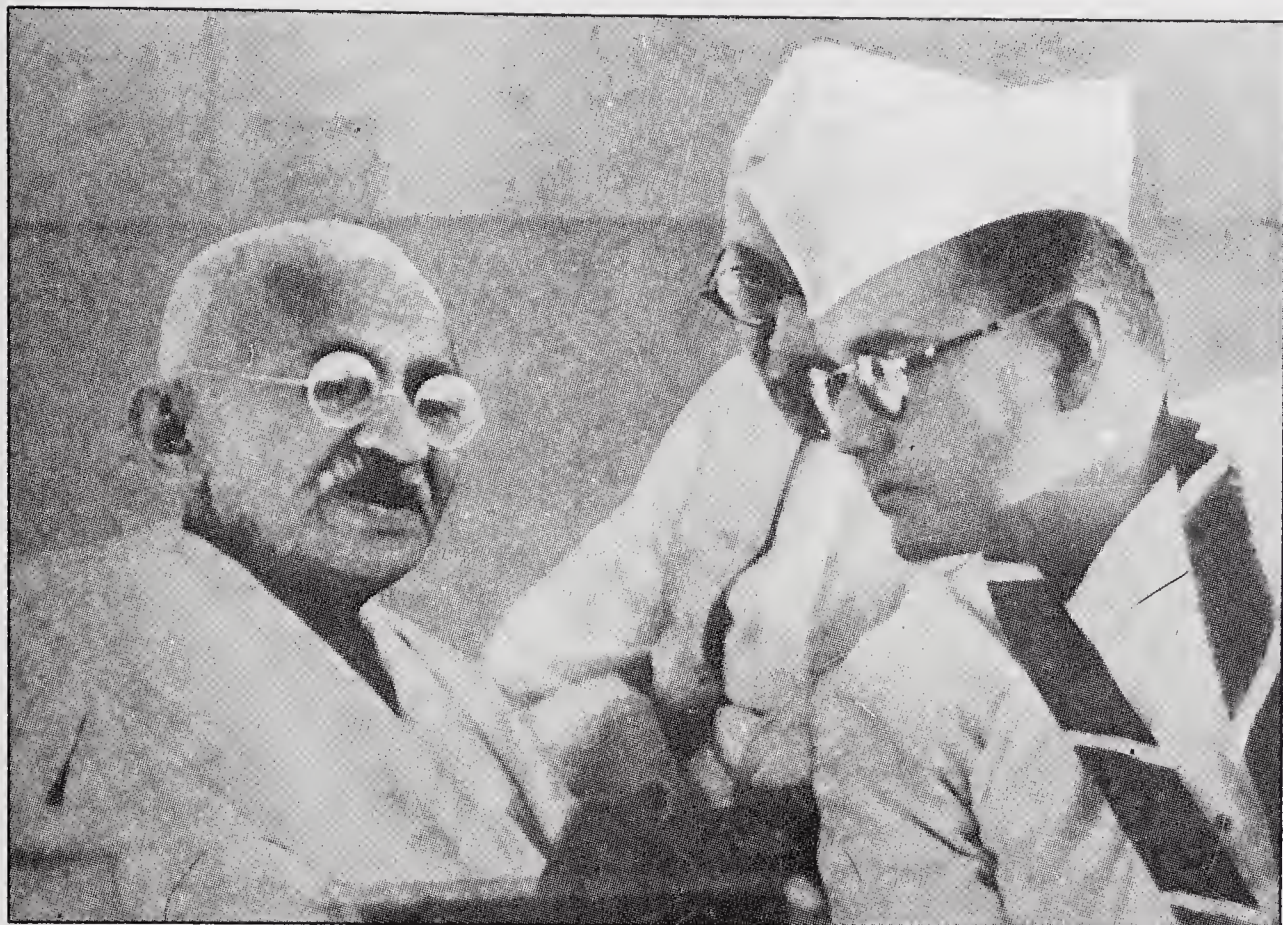
There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseeing power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses, but it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent. Even in ordinary affairs we know that people do not know who rules or why, and how he rules, and yet they know that there is a power that certainly rules. In my tour last year in Mysore, I met many poor villagers, and I found upon inquiry that they did not know, who ruled Mysore.

They simply said, 'Some god ruled it'. If the knowledge of these poor people was so limited about their ruler, I who am infinitely lesser in respect to God, than they to their ruler, need not be surprised if I do not realize the presence of God, the King of Kings. Nevertheless, I do feel, as the poor villagers felt about Mysore, that there is orderliness in the universe, there is an unalterable law governing everything, and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind law, for no blind law, can govern the conduct of living beings. And thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir J.C. Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life. That law then which governs all life is god. Law and the law-giver, are one. I may not deny the law or the law giver, because I know so little about it or him. Just as my denial or ignorance of the existence of an earthly power will avail me nothing, even so my denial of God and his law will not liberate me from it's operation.

Whereas humble and mute acceptance of divine authority, makes life's journey easier, even as the acceptance of earthly rule makes life under it, easier. I do dimly perceive that while everything around me is ever-changing, everdying there is underlying all the changes, a living power, that is changeless that holds all together, that creates, dissolved and recreates.

That informing power or spirit is God, and since nothing else that I see, merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is, and is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent, for I can see that in the midst of death, life persists, in the midst of untruth, truth persists, in the midst of darkness, light persists. Hence, I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is love. He is the supreme good.

But he is no God, who merely satisfies the intellect, if he even does. Does to be God must rule the heart and transform it. He must express himself in every smallest act of his votary. This can only be done through a definite realization more real than the five senses can ever produce. Sense perceptions,



can be, and often are false and deceptive. However, real they may appear to us. Where there is realization, outside the senses, it is infallible, it is proved, not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within. Such testimony is to be found in the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and times. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself.

This realization is preceded by an immovable faith. He who would in his own person test the fact of God's presence can do so by a living faith. And since faith itself cannot be proved by extraneous evidence. The safest course is to believe in the moral government of the world and, therefore, in the supremacy of the moral law, the law of truth and love.

Exercise of faith will be the safest, where there is a clear determination, summarily to reject all that is contrary to truth and love. I confess that I have no argument to convince through reason. Faith transcends reason. All that I can advise is not to attempt the impossible.





SAROJINI NAIDU

1879 Feb, 13	She was born at Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. She was educated in Hyderabad and Madras. She won a scholarship to Cambridge and returned to India in 1898.
1898	She was married to Govindarajan Naidu. She had two sons and two daughters.
1905	Her life as a poetess began to receive acclaim.
1914	Meets Mahatma Gandhi
1915	She joined the Indian National Congress and participated in the freedom movement.
1925	Became President of the Indian National Congress.
1947	Appointed Governor of Uttar Pradesh.
1949	Died at Lucknow.



TRIBUTE TO MAHATMA GANDHI, FEBRUARY 1, 1948.

I feel that sorrow is out of place and tears become a blasphemy. How can he die? Who through his life and conduct and sacrifice, who through his love and courage and speech, has taught the world, the spirit matters not the flesh. The spirit has a power greater than the powers of the combined armies of the earth, combined armies of the ages. He who is small, frail, without money without even the full compliment of garments to cover his body. Not owning even as much earth as might be held on a point of a needle. How was he so much stronger than the forces of violence, the might of empires and the grandeur of embattled forces in the world? Why was it that this little man, this tiny man, this man with this child's body, this man so ascetic, living on the verge of starvation by

choice, so as to be more in harmony with the life of the poor? How was it that he exercised over the entire world of those who revered him and those who hated him, such power as emperors could never wield. It was because he did not care for applause, he did not care of censure. He only cared for the path of righteousness, he cared only for the ideals which he preached and practised. Amidst the most terrible disasters caused by violence and greed of men when the user world was heaped up like dead leaves and dead flowers on battlefields, his faith never swerved. With his own ideal of Non-violence, he believed that though the whole world slaughter itself and the whole world's blood be shed, still, his non-violence would be the authentic foundation of the new civilization of the world. And he believed that he who seeks his life shall lose it, and he who loses his life shall find it.

But as I say it would be the act of faithless deserters if we were to yield to despair. If we were, indeed, to believe that he is dead, if we were to believe that all is lost, because he has gone. Of what avail would be our love and our faith. Of what avail would be our loyalty to him? If we dared to believe that all is lost because his body is gone from our midst. Are we not there his heirs, his spiritual descendents, the legacy of his great ideals, the successors of his great work. Are we not there to implement that work, enhance it, enrich it, and make greater achievements by our joint effort, than he could have made

singly. Therefore, I say the time is over of private sorrow. The time is over for the breathing of breeze of the tearing of hair.

The time is here and now, when we stand up and say we take up the challenge with those who defied Mahatma Gandhi. We are his living symbols, we are his soldiers, we are his carriers of his banner before on embattled world. Our banner is Truth. Our shield is Non-violence our sword is the sword of the Spirit that conquers without blood. Let the people of India, rise up and wipe their tears. Rise up and still their sobs. Rise up and be full of hope and full of cheer. Let us borrow from him, why borrow, he has handed it to us, the radiance of his own personality, the glory of his own courage, the magnificent epic of his character. Shall we not follow in the footsteps of our master? Shall we not give the world the completed message of Mahatma Gandhi. Though his voice will not speak again, have we not a million, million voices to bear his message to the world, not only to the world, of our contemporaries but to the world generation after generation. Shall sacrifice be in vain? Shall his blood be shed for futile purposes of mournings? Or shall we not use that blood, like a *tilak* on our foreheads, the emblem of his legion of peace-loving soldiers to save the world. Here and now, here and now I for one before the world that listens to my quivering voice pledge myself anew, as I pledged myself more than 30 years ago, to the service of the undying Mahatma?



BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1838 June, 26 | Born at Kantalpara, 24 Parganas, West Bengal. |
| 1858 | Became first graduate of University of Calcutta. |
| 1882 | Vande Mataram, a song that first appeared in Bankim Chandra's novel 'Ananda Math'.

This song was used during the freedom struggle movement by those united in action and dedicated to the unity of India. |
| 1894 April, 8 | Died at Calcutta. |

VANDE MATARAM

Vande Mataram

Sujalam, suphalam, Malayaja-shitalam,

Shasyashyamalam, Mataram

Shubharajyotsna, pulakitayaminim,

Phullakusumita-drumadala-shobhinim,

Subhasinim sumadhura-bhashinim

Sukhdam varadam, Mataram

SUBRAHMANYAM BHARATI

- 1882 December, 11 Born in Ettayapuram, Tamil Nadu. Taught as a Tamil teacher in Madurai.
- 1904 Began his career as a journalist using his pen to educate others about the freedom movement. Met various National movement leaders including Sister Nivedita. Wrote his two great poems "Kuyil Pattu" and "Panchali Sapatham"
- 1921 Sept. 12 Died at Thiruvallikeni in Madras.



MAHAKAVI SUBRAHMANYAM BHARATI

Translation in Tamil of Vande Mataram

Vande mataram, vande mataram
Nalirmani neerum, nayāmpadu kanigalum
kulir poonthendralum, kozhum pozhir pasumayum
vaayntha nangilaguvai vaazhiya anneai
Vande mataram, Vande mataram
Thennilavathanir silirthidum eravum
thanniyaal virumalar thangiya tharukkalum
punnagai oliyum themozhip polivum
vaaynthanai inbamum varangalum nalgival:
Vande mataram, Vande mataram.

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Madras Youth Choir
Sangeeta Pandey

these recordings are very old and their quality is not good. However, it is felt that the content of the speeches will provide the listeners with a valuable memory of important moments in the history of India.



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freedom brings responsibilities